



# California Postsecondary Education Commission

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## University of California Irvine Awarded Two Improving Teacher Quality Grants

SACRAMENTO — November 7, 2005 — The University of California Irvine has won funding for two teacher professional development grants serving teachers in the Lynwood and Santa Ana Unified School Districts. The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) awarded the four-year grants to the university in a statewide competition.

The first grant—titled “Accelerating Academic Literacy”—is for \$875,020 to help high school and middle school English teachers in the Lynwood Unified School District deliver effective, research-based instruction in reading and writing. The project seeks to replicate the Pathway Project that has been successful in the Santa Ana Unified School District and apply it to new circumstances. Through seminars and on-site school-year activities, 45 teachers will receive in-depth training to help students use the strategies of successful readers and writers in learning the English/Language Arts standards and accelerating their academic literacy.

The second grant—“Literacy in the History Classroom”—provides \$935,948 to the university to work with history teachers in high schools in the Santa Ana Unified School District. The project includes intensive institutes, follow-up workshops, and the creation of professional networks across grade levels and school boundaries. Teachers in this extremely high-need district will strengthen their knowledge of history content and teaching methods, and will revise their history curriculum to better help students develop the literacy skills they need to learn the state standards. A total of 95 teachers will directly benefit from the project and many more will be benefited indirectly.

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The grant is part of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Program funded under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is the latest edition of a long-standing federal program aimed at improving student achievement through professional development for teachers. Over two decades of administering the program, CPEC has awarded more than \$75 million to colleges and universities working with high-need K-12 schools throughout California. The 2005 grants focus on improving academic literacy in high schools. They also require rigorous evaluation research to demonstrate how the professional development affects student achievement.

Taking note of this requirement, CPEC Executive Director Murray Haberman observed that “Being required to demonstrate the impact of the professional development on student achievement, not just on teacher behavior, is critical and supports CPEC’s overall commitment to accountability in educational programs.”

Howard Welinsky, chairman of the Commission, says the grants play an important role in making sure every student has a highly qualified teacher. “The program has had a long-term impact on helping teachers strengthen their content knowledge and their understanding of effective teaching strategies—key elements of education reform,” he said. “UC Irvine and its partner districts should be proud of the quality of their two proposals and their potential for improving teaching and learning in both Los Angeles and Orange Counties.”

More information about the Commission and its work can be found at its website at [www.cpec.ca.gov](http://www.cpec.ca.gov). For more information about the state program, contact Karen Humphrey, Administrator, Improving Teacher Quality Program, at 916-445-1504 or [khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov](mailto:khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov). For information on the Lynwood project described above, contact Carol Booth Olson at 949-824-7842 or [cbolson@uci.edu](mailto:cbolson@uci.edu). For information on the Santa Ana project described above, contact Nicole Gilbertson at 858-717-2030 or [gilbertn@uci.edu](mailto:gilbertn@uci.edu).

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The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state’s educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities.